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NO FOREIGN DISSEM

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Work in Progress on Assessment of Civilian Casualties in North Vietnam

Work is currently underway in preparing a preliminary assessment on the subject. We hope to have by Monday or Tuesday a first appraisal which will provide (a) a minimum estimate -- casualties reported or revealed in materials such as [REDACTED] (b) an estimate giving some general approximation of the maximum casualties particularly in relationship to the total population exposed to air attack.

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A requirement has been levied on NFIC/IAD for pre- and post-strike analysis of six areas representative of both rural and urban targets. This work will not be completed until Tuesday, although some preliminary readout may start flowing on Monday.

Work is also underway to provide some analysis which will give more perspective to the entire problem of civilian casualties. This work includes statements on official North Vietnam propaganda; an analysis of early warning and civil defense measures, and an examination of the distribution of struck targets according to population density.

Most of the work being done now is focused on attacks on fixed targets. The armed reconnaissance missions probably have a far greater impact on the question of civilian casualties. However, the effect of these missions is so exceedingly difficult if not impossible to analyze in meaningful terms that a rather vast and prolonged effort will be required.

Once the preliminary appraisal is completed, refinement of the estimates will require substantial assistance from NFIC in order to get the data necessary for the application of a methodology for computing casualties in specific target areas.

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Deputy Chief, Trade and Services Division

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